

Edwin Gillo
Dunsey

Mechanic Apprentice.

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CHARLES W. SLACK. }

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M. A. L. A.

QUARTERLY MEETING.

The next regular Quarterly Meeting of the Association will be held on TUESDAY EVENING, Dec. 2d, 1845.

As this will be the most important meeting of the term, a general attendance of the members is highly desirable.
S. B. WAITE, *Rec. Sec.*

SALUTATORY.

KIND FRIENDS —

You will perceive, that a change has taken place in the editorial supervision of this paper. Our predecessor, in consequence of business engagements, has been compelled to resign his station, and the former sub-editor now finds himself elevated to the topmost round of the professional ladder.

Behold, then, most gracious public, before whom editors bow down their heads and publishers bend the knee, your humble servant, duly ensconced in his sanctum — a 7 + 9 domicile — embellished with the relics of an antiquated inkstand, (which for aught we know, was contemporary with Solomon,) sundry books, pamphlets and newspapers, with numerous other unmentionable and not to be mentioned articles, forming altogether as complete a daguerreotype miniature of Babel as the *natives* have had the pleasure of witnessing since those primitive knights of the trowel, forgetting their mother tongue, bawled "more bricks" in such various lingos, that the bewildered hod-carriers were fain to cry, as that bloody-minded one of Scotland did *not* — "hold, enough;" behold us, we say, seated upon the three-legged stool, yclept, by courtesy, the *chair* editorial, in the midst of this heterogeneous collection, and bear witness that we wear our honors with becoming modesty.

But if, perchance, a small spice (*Mem.* we sincerely hope the seasoning will not be *all-spice* of that quality,) of exaltation should be visible in our demeanor, we pray you set it not down in malice, but remember that

"These little things are great to little men,"

and rest assured that it is but the transient ebullition of youthful feeling, which time and experience will soon sufficiently restrain.

As regards the paper, we have nothing to say, save that we shall endeavor to make it worthy the support of its friends, and worthy the Association whose organ it is.

And now, we hold out the right hand of fellowship to our fellow apprentices, and entreat them to "hear us for our cause," and if they will but

"Be to our faults a little blind,
Be to our virtues ever kind,"

we trust that on *their* side, our little sheet will be a welcome visitant, and *we* shall be wrapt in the "seventh heaven" of editorial content.

THE JUNIOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

And so we have arrived at the dignity of editorship! Bright anticipations of ease and grateful visions of quiet repose in the well-cushioned arm-chair fondly are indulged and—*dissipated*! An editor, forsooth, before we've laid aside the humble implements of our daily avocation,—a teacher, and yet only entered ourselves within the portal of the temple of knowledge,—a guide, even before our tottering step beareth us, alone, in safety! An *editor*! aye, an *EDITOR*! and called upon, too, to put forth the *dictum* of the adept, when scarce further progressed in intelligence than the veriest tyro! What an inconsistency!

Sights of angry contributors, with distorted countenances, haunt us; thoughts of ill-requited favors paralyze us. We fear and tremble. But yet not the editor,—the responsibility taker; only his *assistant*. Well, there's relief in that,—but still the fact seems strange! When and how can *we* call up the matured experience of years of observation and reflection, and treat of all and every subject familiarly and philosophically which may be broached by the wisest our associates or mooted by the greatest of learned simpletons? There *must* be a delusion.

But we do not mistake. Here by us reposes the official announcement. We've read and re-read it; studied it carefully, marked its familiarity and seeming indifference, noted its chirography and punctuation, and truly wondered that the hand that penned it was not palsied in the attempt. Well,—after long deliberation, we've *accepted the trust*! not, however, without hesitation. And as, for a brief period, we now-and-then hold a social chat with indulgent friends, may the time pass pleasantly, our errors be

overlooked, enthusiasm and inexperience pardoned, and this little sheet made worthy a perusal. This done and we are content.

c. w. s.

"SOCIETY AS IT IS."

We call the attention of our readers to the article under the above caption in the present number; for, although we do not agree with the author in all respects, yet the subject upon which he treats is daily forcing itself more and more prominently upon the attention of the community, and especially upon the laboring portion thereof.

In our humble opinion, however, most of the prating upon the wrongs of the poorer classes in this country is sheer bombast, encouraged by party demagogues for party purposes, and no more fitted to remedy the evil than the croaking of frogs, or the braying of asses. That there are great and glaring evils in the present organization of the body politic, not even the veriest tyro in knowledge of the world is ignorant enough to deny.

But we have an unwavering faith in the moral and physical progression of mankind, and are content

"Rather to bear the ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of;"

believing that as education becomes diffused, the little that remains of the institutions of a darker era will vanish before its light, and every "being made in the image of God," be enabled to claim for himself the title of that noblest of God's creatures—MAN. As regards the condition of the mechanics of the country, we think they have themselves to blame for whatever of evil may be mingled in their lot, and no one man or set of men can remedy these evils until they put forth their own exertions in the cause. Heretofore, they have undeniably depended too much upon the promises of others—too much upon the fulsome flattery of the political parties for the upholding of their rights, to devote much attention to the only rational and successful mode—the elevation of themselves!

The indignant lines of Byron—

"Hereditary bondmen! know ye not
Who would be free, THEMSELVES must strike the blow?"

may convey a lesson to the dwellers upon our soil, as well as to the degraded and oppressed children of the Grecian state.

Arouse, then, ye young mechanics—

"Ye who, upon the plastic tablet—LIFE,
Must write YOURSELVES; ye, who in peace or strife,
Must move the world, while of the world a part,
Ye who of God's creation are the beating heart;—

Shake off the shackles that have bound you, Prometheus like, to your own destruction, and stand forth

before your fellows, mighty in the consciousness of an unswerving integrity of purpose, proud in your physical and mental resources, and, with a well defined knowledge of your rights, have the courage to defend them;—in brief, take unto yourself the advice of Polonius to his son—"And most of all, be true to *thyself*, and it must follow, as night to day, thou canst not be false to *any* man," and ere long your proud avowal—"I am a *mechanic*," shall be considered as honorable to you, as were the words of him who dwelt amid the seven hilled city—"I am a Roman citizen."

We perceive in the N. Y. Tribune a series of articles under the head—"Labor in New York"—giving an account of the present condition of the different branches of mechanical labor in that city. In a late number is an article upon the state of the printing business, and quite a woe-begone picture it is, too; any thing but calculated to make one of that class *stick* to his *case*. The writer winds up with the following advice:

"Those who are yet in the unimpaired possession of youth and vigor, had better turn their eyes and footsteps towards the rich lands of the West, where independence and plenty may be found. Pride and poverty are miserable companions. Let them leave the first, with their fashionable garments, behind them, and betake themselves to the soil. Our word for it, industry and resolution will overcome all difficulties, and while they should expect to meet and face minor evils, *want* will not be among the number."

And is there no independence to be found in the East? No El Dorado for the heart, save amid the semi-civilized countries of the West? We hope better things; for in our short pilgrimage through life we have found some friends whose regard we are proud to cherish, and whose "memory is fragrant;"—some few lilies of the vale amid the vast nettle field of life; and most devoutly do we pray that when we shall be summoned to our final home; when the eye grows dim, and the mind wanders to that far-off land, anticipating its summons thitherward, our path through the dark valley may be lighted by their presence, and cheered by their sympathy.

O more than blest, when life's short journey through,
Our anchor drops, where first our pennons flew.

No, no, young man. Learn your trade at the East, and then, if misfortune *should* press too heavily upon you, and life seem but a burden, almost too weighty to be borne, *then*

"Over the mountains, westward ho!"

Better cherish there, in affectionate remembrance, the memory of the friends you love, than forget, at home, all those tender ties which bind man to man, and which alone make life desirable, or death terrible.

OUR LECTURES.

The introductory to the usual course of free public lectures before the Library Association was delivered on Tuesday evening, the 11th inst., by WILLIAM S. STUDLEY, a respected past and honorary member of the institution. A large number of friends attended the exercises, and the address upon "*The influence of the Mechanic Arts upon the Fame of Nations*," was an able performance. The lecturer cited many instances of mechanical ingenuity and artistical skill as exhibited by the nations of antiquity, many of the structures of which even now, though sadly obliterated by "time's effacing fingers," were monuments of grandeur and magnificence, and evidences of a refinement and genius which proudly might be contemplated. The influence of these works of art upon the fame of the nations which fostered and encouraged their erection was well described, and the enduring character of that distinction which was the sure attendant of a land favoring the arts, ably portrayed. Many other topics incidental to the subject of the address were briefly alluded to; and, in conclusion, the numerous facilities afforded our people for mental and moral, as well as social improvement, by means of debating societies and lyceums, fully discussed. Addressing himself to the young men around him, he exhorted them always to maintain the respectability of their avocations, approved as they were by the great Architect of the Universe, and stating that the path to distinction and honor in life was open to all who were willing to walk worthily therein.

We take this opportunity again to extend an invitation to our friends to favor the Association with their presence during the present course of lectures, which will take place on successive Tuesday evenings throughout the winter. Among the lecturers who will address the Society, in addition to those who have already appeared, are Rev. Messrs. Cornell, Clinch, Butler and Hague, Dr. C. T. Jackson, Geo. S. Hillard, Richard H. Dana, Wendell Phillips, and Anson Burlingame, Esqrs., besides others confidently expected,—promising a series of lectures not inferior to any of the public courses which the Association have given.

A TRIP TO NEW YORK.

[Continued from page 44.]

While nearing the wharf, I was sensibly reminded of my vicinity to a great city, by the faces of the numerous throngs who were crowding around to witness our disembarkation. Such a collection of pallid-faced and stunted-formed clerks, of broken down "swells," of half sober rowdies, bearing upon their countenances the marks of habitual dissipation, and of low life and conduct, in fact, of loafers of every kind and description, I have rarely witnessed. I

left this goodly assemblage quickly behind me, having previously provided for the safety of my luggage, and strolled on to the city. But, alas! I should be sorry to take my readers with me through the dirt, and filth, and wretchedness, which characterise the streets which lie adjacent to the water's side, and that I may make my narrative as select as possible, I will retrace my steps to the Battery, and commence my sketch from that place—the only decent public promenade in New York.

The Battery is situated somewhat similarly, in point of locality, to our Long Wharf. It forms the extreme end of the island upon which New York is built, and having been very properly reserved, like our Common, for the benefit of those who desire to take a little fresh air, to give a slight relish to the mingled smoke and dust and any thing but oxygen and nitrogen, which form the atmosphere of a city. A good view may be obtained, from the open space, of the beautiful and extensive harbor, the town of Brooklyn, Governor's and Staten Islands, and all the other minutiae which harbors generally contain. Its extent is respectable, although not by any means approaching to a third of that of our Common, to which I think it is inferior in every respect, saving in that of its happily chosen situation. It is perfectly flat, with many young trees scattered over it, with seats, and walks, and grass, (which latter, however, must not be walked upon,) and has a tall liberty pole in front, the best use of which, in my opinion, is that of a trysting-place. Immediately in front of the Battery, and built out in the form of a peninsula, joined only to the land by a narrow isthmus, is the Castle Garden, a place which a green hand might well take for a veritable battery, for there is not only no other sign about the place of such a building, but it really does look very like one. It is, however, converted into the peaceful uses of a promenade and amusement saloon; but I never visited it, having contracted against it an inveterate prejudice, on account of its being occasionally used as a nigger-concert hall.

Walk across the Battery, and pass out of the iron gate, which shuts after you with a great clatter, and you enter upon the commencement of the ever-renowned Broadway. There are not, however, for as much as a quarter of a mile, any signs of the immense traffic and busy bustle which characterise that thoroughfare, and none but private houses, and pretty good sized ones, too, meet the eye. Cross the way, and you come to the Bowling-Green, a small, enclosed place, with a fountain in the middle, and grass around it; and directly behind it is the burnt district—the scene of the last great fire. I was really astonished at the great extent of this lamentable conflagration. I am but a poor judge of sizes and distances, but I remember guessing that its area was about as much as half that of the space of waste land which is in Boston facetiously termed the Botanic Garden. When I was there, over this wide extent, stretching across Broadway, and taking in large sections of streets, nothing was seen but heaps of ruins. An auctioneer had taken his station upon one extensive mound, and was engaged in selling the material of which it was composed, and which, upon examination, proved to be *tea*, in one huge mass, in fact, caked together, through the potent influence of fire and water. It was intended to be converted to the purposes of manure, though I heard one Irishman observe that "mighty good tay might

be made of it yet;" and after disposing of it, the auctioneer turned his attention to another large heap, of half-burnt cotton, which, however, found no purchaser. I understand that already, after the lapse of about three months since my visit, long and tall rows of stores are rising from the ashes of their predecessors, speaking in eloquent language of the exhaustless energy and limitless resources of which civilization, and its offspring, wealth, are the possessors. Leave these ruins behind you, and pass down Broadway. Soon you reach the point where the line of shops commences, and from thence, for three miles at least, you may journey onward through a pretty wide thoroughfare, (about the width of State street,) lined on each side with receptacles for the display of all that the eye can see, the hand can touch, or money can purchase. Stone pavement, instead of brick, predominates, and the sidewalk on either side is bordered by long rows of posts and rails, serving at once for sign-boards and advertisements, and for the support of the over-hanging window-shades. The traffic, and hurry, and bustle, the passing to and fro of coaches and carts, is of course much greater than in Boston, but I could observe no range of shops superior in elegance and handsome appearance to the upper end of our Tremont street, even if equal, and certainly no wholesale warehouses even approaching in massiveness and solidity of character, and imposing grandeur of structure, to the noble piles of buildings which have sprung up in our Milk street, and on which the most unimaginative and decidedly democratic cognomen of "blocks" has been bestowed.

After traversing the distance of about a mile from the Battery, the central part of New York, in point of importance to the sight-seer, is obtained. Here the road branches off to the right into Centre and Chatham streets, first passing round and forming the limit, on the right hand side, of the Park. This is another open space, about half the size of the Battery, railed round, containing within it the beautiful and elegantly constructed City Hall. I would that I were a judge of architecture, that I might give a circumstantial description of this handsome building.— Suffice it to say, that in point of neatness, elegance and beauty, it surpasses any building that I have seen either in Boston or New York. The corner of Broadway, which marks the separation of the two thoroughfares, directly opposite the Park, is occupied by an extensive and high building, the American Museum, a mere receptacle for baboons, orang-outangs, petrified men and mastodons. On the other side of the road stands a handsome church, and next to it the famous Astor house, looking for all the world exactly like the Tremont, only about one third larger. Cross over again, and pass behind the Park a few steps, you will come to the Park Theatre, a handsome stone building, and still farther on you will see old Tammany Hall, a most unpretending structure of brick, painted a dirty white, and looking as decidedly democratic, approaching even to locofocoism, as any building I ever beheld that bore the name of a hall. It is only after passing down Broadway more than two miles distance from the Park, that the stores begin to become few and far between, and probably three miles, as far as I could determine, must be passed over from thence, before a sight of any thing like an extensive open space can be observed.

But I must defer an account of my further rambles until a future paper.

W.

WANDERINGS.

BY A WANDERER.

CHAPTER VII.

"Natur', Natur', she's a ruin 'un, is natur'."—(Squeers.)

Retracing my way through the village, I re-crossed the ferry, and returned home, much pleased with my rambles, and weary withal. With an appetite keenly sharpened, and a disposition in complete subjection to that appetite, did I present myself at the supper table, promising to do ample justice to the viands.— Ah, reader, I was *hungry*, and the disappearance of eatables and drinkables, when the "Mysterious Stranger" supped in "Commons' Hall," (vide "Holmes' Poems,") was not more sudden and enigmatical than on this occasion.

Having satisfied the cravings of hunger, I bargained with the landlord for a "Havannah," "taking mine ease" on the portico, that I might pay my devoirs to the noxious herb and study "character" in the physiognomies of the passers by, and as the mist from the burning weed expanded itself upon the air, sending a thrill of pleasure to the inmost soul, through the olfactory nerves, it formed itself into a thousand grotesque and fanciful shapes, through which I saw, as "through a glass—darkly."

The study of human nature is, or claims to be, (Pope's Essay, book second,) "the proper study of mankind."

The first subject of my mental limnerings was in the person of a burly citizen, who had lain violent hands on the collar of a little boy, and to whom he was zealously opening his heart for having—with malice aforethought—injured his property or person. The citizen was not scrupulously fastidious in the selection of his oaths, and from his tone and manner it became apparent that he was lashing himself into an uncommon passion, threatening the execution of summary justice; while the youth,—

"distilled

Almost to a jelly by the act of fear,
Stood dumb, and spake not to him."

My cigar executed a sudden gyration to the opposite corner of my mouth as I unconsciously murmured,

"The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain—"

There is a feeling highly elating and buoyant, at the idea of castigating a youth, when performed with a perfect *nonchalance*, for the reason that there seems to be an *idea* pervading the unsophisticated soul of the boy, upon whom you are operating, that you—the operator—are possessed with a patriotic principle of action, beyond mediocrity, a principle wholly insoluble by any mental exertion of which he is capable, and for which he looks in vain to any principle of his own as analogous. This is, in the facetious language of Mr. Dickens, speaking through his mouth-piece, "Squeers," of "Do-the-boys' Hall" memory—"Natur'!"

Subject number two, was a vicious minded boy, leaning against a post on the opposite corner, armed with a tin tube, which in our schoolboy days was called a "bean blower;" and with a zeal "worthy a better cause," he was laudably engaged with this instrument for his own amusement, and it was refreshing to witness the innocent joy to which the youth gave himself away as drivers and cartmen looked

with anxiety for the cause of the fresh impetus in the speed of their horses, or as dog after dog darted on, uttering a faint yelp, as bean after bean made an impression on their noses or ears.

Presently a colored gentleman, in a red waistcoat, came jogging down the street at an easy pace, with his hands in his pockets, and by an "inarticulate modulation of his breath," he was pouring out his soul in the pathetic strains of that gem of songs, "Dan Tucker,"—a slave to the fascinating power of music. One look at the boy and bean blower was sufficient to satisfy me as to what was inevitably to follow.

The scene here became intensely interesting. The tube was levelled, quickly sighted, and—discharged. The bean flew along its trackless course with an unerring aim—no smoke, no report; it was, in fact, an *air gun*. In much less time than we have taken in the description, the missile took effect upon the prominent feature in the face of the colored man, who started back with a shout, more in fright than pain, losing his hat in the excitement; while I, in the convulsions of laughter that followed, absorbed an unlimited quantity of smoke. When I came to myself, the injured man was wending his way down the street, grasping his snuffer with his right hand, which was undergoing a thrilling sensation, while the boy was speedily sloping in an opposite direction, his face of an ashy paleness, as a realizing sense of the enormity of his crime seemed gradually to beam upon his mind.

But it would be superfluous for me to go into detail, with regard to what I saw, and my meditations thereon. There was a dropsical looking individual, who passed and re-passed me several times, with a wen under his ear, and a blue cotton umbrella under his arm. There was an alarming wildness in the expression of his countenance, a blending of the ludicrous and the frightful. I turned from that subject to a "sweet sixteen," in form a perfect "Hebe," her complexion rather dark, a beautifully formed mouth, whose half open lips displayed a set of pearls; a nose faultless—not the snub, the pug, or the pointed, but of just the size and form as would be called the "*chef-d'œuvre*" of noses; her hair "black as the wing of the raven," fell in ringlets across and was in striking contrast with her snowy neck; her eyes—those orbs, meeting mine, as they shone out from under their long silken lashes, seemed to say—no matter what they *said*—the remark was strictly confidential.

[To be continued in our next.]

SOCIETY AS IT IS.

MESSRS. EDITORS,—The following thoughts, together with many others of a similar nature, have often suggested themselves to us while taking a side-long peep at *society as it is*.

Society, to him who looks only upon the surface of things, or to him who has such unbounded hope as to color everything brightly and call forth joyous and only joyous anticipations of his own and man's destiny, and which never allows him (even for a short time) to think seriously on the dark side of the picture,—presents no remarkable feature; but to him who looks beyond the surface, and at things as they are, it presents an appalling, we might almost say, *horrid*, spectacle,—for he sees reared side by side the gorgeous mansion and the miserable hovel, the home

of luxury and ease, and the abode of poverty and distress. In the former dwells the man, who, by our peculiar organization of society, has grown *rich* almost without an exertion, while in the latter dwells one—oftener half a dozen—who have spent almost their life's blood, or, what is equivalent, the youth and vigor of manhood, (while they themselves have gained but a meager and scanty subsistence,) to enable the purse-proud aristocrat to roll in his carriage, send his sons to college, his daughters to the most *fashionable* boarding-school, where they should be taught drawing, music, and all the *fashionable* accomplishments of the day, together with the best mode of catching a *rich* husband, that they may spend *their* lives in opulence and ease, and one continual round of *fashionable* dissipation, and also to enable all these favored ones to occupy the best and most costly seats in the house of *God*, we ought, in truth, to have said the house of fashion, while we need not to have said the *best seat*, for the most *costly* is of course the *best*, so long as money is the standard of respectability.

He will also observe the heartless competition going on among our merchants, among our manufacturers, and indeed among laborers, which compels them day by day to pick each other's pockets, and thereby, in the long run, their *own*, to prolong a miserable existence; for miserable it must be to him or her who spends all of the rest, and a part of the time which, according to the laws of nature, (whose laws, by the way, *cannot* be violated with impunity,) should be devoted to sleep, in labor to gain a bare subsistence, and thousands there are who do it.

Let him who doubts this, our assertion, and thinks it a little too much to believe, inquire at our work shops of those who are called common laborers, and of that portion of the female community who gain their livelihood by their needle, and he will be *shocked* as well as *surprised* that society, (good, rich, moral society,) allows such misery to exist. But, say you, we know this is not the case, for we are acquainted with many, very many of every class who are not thus driven to extremities by the iron hand of *circumstances*. Stop friend, inquire, possess yourself of statistical as well as observational information on the subject, and our word for it, you will talk differently, think differently, and act differently.

These things ought not to be; but society is based upon antagonistical principles, and so long as it remains as it is, these glaring inconsistencies will exist. But it is said "competition is the life of trade;"—it should rather be said, competition is the life of some, but the death of more of those engaged in it. Destroy that, and you will in a great measure remove the cause of so much wretchedness as now exists. But that is not the only cause of misery, degradation and despair which now exist; there are many others linked in and growing out of it, which need to be removed before you will permanently ameliorate the condition of man. One of these is the opposition of interests; and so long as one man's interest remains in opposition to another's, a fruitful cause of vice, sin, and iniquity still exists. Destroy these, and then we may in very deed, live up to the injunction of Jesus, "Love thy neighbor as thyself;" while at the present time it is impossible to do so, as well as a solemn mockery for the fat, sleek-looking, long-robed, well-saliered occupants of pulpits to re-echo the injunction.

A. B. M.

THOUGHTS' GLIMMERINGS.—No. III.

DICKENS AND HIS WRITINGS.

Many are the encomiums which have been bestowed by the critics of the literary world upon the writings of Charles Dickens, and many, too, more latterly, have been the words of sarcasm and censure uttered by the American public upon this gifted author. There is, probably, no one of the numerous English writers of the present day whose works have been more generally read in this country, no one who has fed and fanned a flame of worthier enthusiasm, no one who has better claims to be considered a popular author, than Mr. Dickens. The people of the United States were not behind their brethren on the other side of the Atlantic to appreciate the beauties of his style, the worth of his sentiments, or the excellence of his inculcations; and yet, at the present time, a degree of indifference, if not of actual coldness, is manifested relative to his productions and professional career more significant of meaning than the studied neglect which too often attend the deserving efforts of aspirants for literary fame.

We may as well confess in the outset of this faint "glimmering" of the many rare excellencies of Dickens, that we are warm admirers of the effusions of his pen. There is scarce an emanation of his mind, from the newspaper "*Sketches*" of his youthful prompting to literary distinction, to "*The Chimes*" and "*Christmas Carols*" of his more matured experience and knowledge as an author, including even his "*American Notes*" and "*Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*," that doth not receive our applause and commendation, though with different degrees of preference, as the varied productions of any author seldom fail to command. We oft have indulged our delight for ease and felicity of composition, by yielding to the pleasing fascination which this writer throws around his works, and have laughed at his merry humor, sympathized with the objects of his pity and commiseration, been sad at his portraiture of scenes of destitution and want, rejoiced with him at the triumphs of virtue and excellence as depicted by his glowing imagination, or revelled in his gorgeous descriptions of worth and manly nature, which so liberally are dispensed from his overflowing treasury of kindly sympathies and warm-hearted generousities.

The great merit of Dicken's writings seems to us,—and as has been also universally acknowledged by those who have made the perusal of his essays their pleasure or pastime,—to be the ready power and facility which he possesses to draw forth from his readers their lively attention, deep interest, their earnest thoughts or more elevated feelings, sketching his characters, his scenes, and all the parts which strengthen the enchantment, with such vigor of style and beauty of delineation, that not a single noble impulse of the heart is allowed to remain dormant, not a high souled purpose awakened but with an irresistible prompting to action, not a fond wish which gratifies and gladdens the heart, but receives its desire and fulfillment; or, if we turn to the more volatile and humorous of his productions, not a merry vein of all the ease-seeking, joy-infusing influences of a laughter-loving mirthfulness which pervades us, but is feasted, filled, *satiated*, with a banquet of quaintness and drollery of exquisite richness and flavor.

Who has not been touched by the tender artlessness of an *Oliver Twist* or a poor *Smikey*, ennobled by the perusal of the virtues and womanly kindnesses of a *Kate Nickleby* or the innocent *Nell*, warmed by the tokens of honest friendship given by the rugged *John Browdie* or the unfortunate *Newman Noggs*, felt proud of the generous worth and manly excellence of *Frank Cherryble* or his friend *Nicholas*, made more acquainted with the deceit of the world and, therefore, taught to avoid its vices, by the character of a *Ralph Nickleby* or a *Bill Sikes*, or sported in gayety and merry recklessness at the whims and oddities of the inimitable *Pickwick* and his company? Or, if the mind be tuned to seriousness, there is food for reflection in many a page of Dickens; the graphic description of the wretchedness and distress of the lower orders of the English people, the masterly exposition of the foibles, abuses and vices of those in higher life, will make the thoughtful pause in his perusal, and if the mind is not enlightened and benefitted, the feelings purified and refreshed, our means of information and intelligence can scarce fail of being increased and extended.

It was at the height of a literary popularity almost unequalled, that a visit to this country was contemplated and indulged by Mr. Dickens; and soon after, scarce before the echoing of the welcomings which greeted him from one end of our domain to the other had ceased its vibrations upon the ocean which had borne him safely homewards, and which separates the two great nations of one lineage, one language, and, we trust, of long-continued peaceful relation,—appeared from his pen, his "*American Notes* for general circulation." As could but be expected, a generous public, who had made themselves familiar with all that had been put forth by this honored author, whose kindly reception was but a slight tribute of regard for worthy merit rightly appreciated by two hemispheres, was eager to hear the remarks which might be made upon our national and more social characteristics by one who had but so recently sojourned with us, and under circumstances supposed to be so gratifying to his feelings. Our presses soon teemed and burdened with his "*Notes*;" the desire to possess a copy was most intense; and from a deluging stream of cheap issue and circulation, scarce a hiding-place in all our precincts but received its enthusiasm-assuaging brooklet. The work was universally read and—*condemned*!

It is useless to dwell at length upon the causes which produced this revulsion of friendly regard; suffice it to say, the tide of popular favor was completely turned. An American public, ever alive to the convictions of meritorious excellence, open and generous in the encouragement it yields to the deserving aspirant for literary honors, could not brook honest strictures upon its own dwelling-place, gladdened though it were with the manifold rewards of art and skill, upon peculiarities which mark our enterprise and industry, habits and laws which influence our social relations, and institutions which have given us a name and rank and worth among the nations of the earth. Honest, we believe these strictures to have been, though the author was mistaken in some of his conclusions. The many laudatory notices of our public charities, the numerous eulogiums fastened upon the intelligence and station of the great body of our manufacturing people, the favorable observations elicited by our schools and seminaries of public instruction, our churches and means of moral and re-

ligious culture, offered no palliation for a frank utterance of thoughts by an Englishman respecting peculiarities and practices, the truth of which in many cases, in the private conversations with our own neighbors and countrymen, we too often readily and frankly admit!

It is amusing, sometimes, to note the weakness of nations as well as individuals, and to mark a national love of adulation, which will smile fondly upon praise bestowed, but gnash its teeth terribly at a censure ventured. In no case, we are almost persuaded to believe from recent events, is this foible more strikingly exhibited than in the American character. Let but smooth-tongued compliment be tendered our country, and we take to ourselves in sincerity all that may be said; we kiss the hand that proffers the kindness; we feel pleased, gratified, *proud*, believing all that appears to be, and maintaining a ridiculous gravity, illy comporting with our professions of general intelligence, while the panegyric is sounding. But let our peculiarities as a people, traits as necessarily incident to nations as eccentricities are to individuals,—be mentioned and strictured, though in a spirit of the utmost frankness and good humor, and a chord is struck whose vibrations are long and loud, seeming as if swept by a hand which knows no restraint, and as a recompense for which no humble apology would suffice. While we trust we shall not live long enough to hear our country and her institutions universally *decied* by our own countrymen, we dare to hope we shall be permitted to behold the day, and that not far distant, when friendly remark upon our national characteristic can be kindly received though from a foreigner.

But there is a "saving grace" in the Dedication to the "American Notes," which in our view, is an ample remuneration for all that Mr. Dickens' observation and research has induced him to say, whether in our praise, or, less welcome, to the detriment of our manifest self-regard,—a recompense, which, if not received in that spirit of American liberality which is glad to do honor to independence of thought, yet should be welcomed for the candor it breathes, the deferential respect it honestly exhibits.

We are well aware that the principal reason of exception to Dickens' Notes by our countrymen arises from what that gentleman thought proper to say relative to the institution of slavery in our land and its influence upon the white population who are immediately brought in contact with it,—and the remark is often made that it would have been far worthier in him to have lifted his voice and pen against the more terrible system of subserviency and degradation—mental, moral, and social,—which lend so additional a tinge to the black pall of England's tyranny. But this he *has* done, and in so masterly a manner, too, that the universal response which went from the British press, told how well the truth had been spoken and the censure bestowed. If, then, the claims of humanity prompts him here, as well as elsewhere, to raise his warning and persuasive voice against the institutions of oppression, does it better become us to aid in stopping that voice rather than bidding him success in his noble philanthropy?

There are many other considerations which are presented to the mind in our retrospect of Mr. Dickens' career, but we think we have "said enough," even though space would allow further remark;—and with the utterance of the belief that no person can arise from a careful, studious perusal of the writ-

ings of this author but with his feelings elevated, his mind more enlarged, his knowledge increased, and himself a happier, better mortal, we leave the subject.

C. W. S.

MESSRS. EDITORS,—I presume that most of your readers have heard about the famous Gunpowder Plot; but, since you have no doubt some persons who are better acquainted with the history of their own than that of the mother country, I will take the liberty to say something about it.

A few years, then, after the year of our Lord 1600, a number of Catholic gentlemen, whether with or without the concurrence of the great body of Catholics it matters not, being dissatisfied with the then existing government and its Protestant King, James I., formed a conspiracy to change at once the state of affairs in England, by cutting off the king and parliament at one blow. Accordingly, they hired a vault beneath the houses of Parliament and stowed it with thirty-six barrels of gunpowder, concealed beneath piles of faggots. They calculated that when the King opened Parliament in person, with all the great men of his court around him, and the whole assembled bodies of Lords and Commons, they would set fire to the gunpowder and blow King and Parliament all up together. One Guy Fawkes, a Catholic gentleman of good family, volunteered his services to ignite the match, and the plot seemed certain to succeed. However, before the meeting of Parliament, the design was discovered by means of one of the confederates, and on November 5th, 1605, Guy Fawkes was arrested in the vault, and the gunpowder removed. Ever since that time, the 5th of November has been celebrated in England by the lower classes in a singular manner. The boys save up their money and purchase or make fireworks of all kinds, and construct effigies, which are intended to represent the redoubtable Guy Fawkes himself, and on that day parade the streets of the towns, carrying the effigies before them, and singing or writing songs composed for the occasion—some probably more than two centuries old. In the evening, bonfires are lighted and the effigies are suspended over them by the neck, and being stuffed with combustible matter, they burn up in a manner which is the delight of the juvenile witnesses. The greatest indignities are perpetrated upon their helpless victim, squibs are fired at him, crackers are placed in his mouth, and he receives the general execration of the crowd. On the night of the fifth of November a stranger would think that there were a hundred houses on fire in every city, for great is the mania on that night for letting off fireworks and lighting bonfires. The proof sheets of a book entitled the "History of Newbury," which has lately been published in your good city, recently came into my hands, and from them I learn that the celebration I have mentioned used to take place in New England also, until the time when our good King George received leave of absence, whether in person or by proxy, from the free and independent United States of America. I send you below an account of the manner in which the fifth of November was there celebrated, which I have extracted from the above work. It seems that the Puritanical juveniles made more fuss about it than do my countrymen at the present day, whatever they might have done in the year 1765, to which date the following extract refers.

"In the daytime, companies of little boys might be

seen in various parts of the town, (Newbury,) with their little Popes, dressed up in the most grotesque and fantastic manner, which they carried about, some on boards and some on little carriages, for their own and others amusement. But the great exhibition was reserved for the night, in which young men, as well as boys, participated. They first constructed a huge vehicle, varying at times from twenty to forty feet long, eight or ten wide, and five or six high, from the lower to the upper platform, on the front of which they erected a paper lantern, capacious enough to hold, in addition to the lights, five or six persons. Behind that, as large as life, sat the mimic Pope, and several other personages, monks, friars, &c. Last, but not least, stood an image of what was designed to be a representation of Old Nick himself, furnished with a pair of huge horns, holding in his hand a pitchfork, and otherwise accoutred, with all the frightful ugliness that their ingenuity could devise. The next step, after they had mounted the ponderous vehicle on four wheels, chosen their officers, captain, first and second lieutenant, purser, &c., placed a boy under the platform, to elevate and move round, at proper intervals, the moveable head of the Pope, and attached ropes to the front part of the machine, was to take up their march through the principal streets of the town. Their custom was, to call at the principal houses in various parts of the town, ring their bells, cause the Pope to elevate his head and look round upon the audience, and repeat the following lines :

'The fifth of November,
As you well remember,
Was gunpowder treason and plot ;
I know of no reason
Why the gunpowder treason,
Should ever be forgot.
When the first king James the sceptre swayed,
This hellish powder plot was laid.
Thirty-six barrels of powder placed down below,
All for old England's overthrow :
Happy the man, and happy the day,
That caught Guy Fawkes in the middle of his play.
You'll hear our bell go jink, jink, jink ;
Pray madam, sirs, if you'll something give,
We'll burn the dog, and never let him live.
We'll burn the dog without his head,
And then you'll say the dog is dead.
From Rome, from Rome, the pope is come,
All in ten thousand fears ;
The fiery serpent's to be seen,
All head, mouth, nose and ears.
The treacherous knave had so contrived,
To blow king and parliament all up alive :
God by his grace he did prevent
To save both king and parliament.
Happy the man, and happy the day,
That caught Guy Fawkes in the middle of his play.
Match touch, catch prime,
In the good nick of time.
Here is the Pope that we have got,
The whole promoter of the plot.
We'll stick a pitchfork in his back,
And throw him in the fire.'

After the verses were repeated, the purser stepped forward, and took up his collection. Nearly all on whom they called gave something. After perambulating the town and finishing their collections, they concluded their evening's entertainment with a splendid supper ; after making, with the exception

of the wheels, and the heads of the effigies, a bonfire of the whole concern, to which were added, all the wash tubs, tar barrels, and stray lumber, that they could lay their hands on. With them, the common custom was, to steal all the stuff. But those days have long since passed away. The last exhibition of the kind took place in the year 1765. The principal cause of its discontinuance was, an unwillingness to displease the French, whose assistance was deemed so advantageous during the revolution."

A BRITON.

THE REDEMPTION OF LABOR.

NO. I.

The agitation of the subject of the wrongs of Labor, and the means of its elevation to a standard of respectability, is daily becoming more general and exciting ; and though it may be deemed a subject in which persons of our time of life can have no immediate interest, yet the period will so soon arrive when we may be called upon to act upon it, that it can be no waste of time to spend a few moments in an investigation of its general propositions.

The first thing which, in glancing at the subject, strikes the attention, is the melancholy fact, that Labor is physically, morally, and politically depressed and degraded. It does not possess the respectability, or receive the reward, which its usefulness, nay, its indispensable importance, should claim for it. There is, in the public sentiment, an odium attached to it, which is as unjust as it is unaccountable. It is forcibly limited to its own peculiar circle, and the standard of that circle is the lowest in society. To regret this is natural, but inefficient ; to bewail it, is absolutely ineffectual ; to remove the stigma, is the work to be done. And what are the means by which we are to do it ?

Among the various systems proposed for the amelioration of the condition of the laboring class, that of the celebrated Fourier has hitherto occupied a prominent position. But we think it may be pronounced impracticable for the attainment of the results it contemplates. The plan of banding together in communities can never become universal, and the success of the system pre-supposes the existence of an elevated standard of moral sentiment in mankind which does not exist, and which it never could produce ; and which, moreover, when it is produced, would destroy the necessity for the system itself.

Throwing aside, then, this scheme of Association, on Fourier's plan, as useless and impracticable, the question presents itself, which is the most important or the most effectual—a moral, or a political reform ? In other words, should the producing class first contend for social respectability, or political equality ? Should they organize themselves for the purpose of using moral suasion with the community, or unanswerable argument at the ballot-box ?

The consideration of these questions demands more space than the proper length of your articles will allow. I have merely thrown out these few desultory suggestions more with the hope of calling the attention of your contributors to the general subject, than with the thought of enlightening your readers, but with your leave, Messrs. Editors, I will continue the subject in a future number, and endeavor to suggest some means by which labor may be redeemed from the thralldom of a mistaken and unworthy prejudice, and a consequent social insignificance.

A. L. M.